



Volunteer of the Month: June

From the confines of Shands hospital to the offices in the ACORN Clinic, Ralph Horky, MHS, is revered by many for his wonderful insights and easygoing nature. For these reasons and more, he has been selected as this month's Volunteer of the Month at the ACORN Clinic.

Although "retired" after 30 years of health planning, Horky holds a position as an adjunct professor at the University of Florida in its Public Health department where he fosters students' quest for knowledge in a confusing health system.

With all of this on his plate, Horky continues to cook and prepare salads every Tuesday and Thursday for the meals provided at St. Francis House, a local homeless shelter, as he has for the past four years. He even goes to the Waldo flea market to gather fresh fruits and vegetables for his creations.

Since this past January, Horky has served as a strategic planning consultant for ACORN Clinic. He has worked with the Board of Directors, volunteers, and a team of student interns. This involved a series of biweekly meetings including a special "coaching" session with student interns to prepare them for the upcoming work with the board of directors and key volunteers.

In March, a Strategic Planning Workshop was planned for and facilitated by Horky for 22 participants. The results of that workshop were presented in May and harbored thought provoking ideas that will help to continue to improve the clinic.

"When you do my kind of work," Horky said, "you hold up a mirror to the people you work with to see themselves better."

In his words, Horky said that he has "done nothing." He greatly underestimates effect of his selfless contribution of his time and attention to details that would otherwise be overlooked.

Reflecting on ACORN Clinic, Horky said, “It’s... the most neighborly [place] I’ve ever been in my life.” He commended the staff on their excellence of care and unwavering courtesy.

“It’s nice to be associated with good people,” he said. Especially the director, Candice King, whom he described as “a pistol.”

Horky believes his impact on the ACORN Clinic was minimal, but his contributions have not gone unnoticed by the board and staff. Though he thinks he has “done nothing”, Mr. Horky has actually contributed to the unified mission and vision of ACORN Clinic.